IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-18 (Canceled).

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): A hydrocarbon reforming catalyst, comprising:

a carrier containing (a) at least one compound selected from the group consisting of lanthanum oxide, cerium oxide, and zirconium oxide, (b) manganese oxide, (c) alumina, and (d), supported on the carrier, at least one noble metal component selected from the group consisting of a ruthenium component, a platinum component, a rhodium component, a palladium component, and an iridium component;

wherein component (a) of the carrier is present in an amount of 1 to 20 mass% with respect to the amount of the reforming catalyst; ~~and~~

wherein the noble metal component is present in an amount of 0.1 to 8 mass% as reduced to the noble element based on the amount of the reforming catalyst; [[,]] and ~~wherein components (b) and (c) are present in the carrier in an amount of 72-98.9 mass%~~

wherein the carrier is produced by impregnating alumina (c) with (a') at least one compound selected from the group consisting of a lanthanum compound, a cerium compound, and a zirconium compound; calcining the impregnated alumina carrier at 400 to 600°C; impregnating the calcined carrier with (b') a manganese compound; and calcining the thus-impregnated carrier at 800 to 1,000°C.

Claims 20-29 (Canceled).

Claim 30 (Currently Amended): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim [[20]] 19, wherein the manganese compound (b') is manganese acetate.

Claim 31 (Canceled).

Claim 32 (Previously Presented): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 19, wherein the manganese oxide (b) is contained in the reforming catalyst in an amount of 3 to 20 mass%.

Claims 33-34 (Canceled).

Claim 35 (Withdrawn): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 19, which further contains at least one species selected from the group consisting of an alkali metal component and an alkaline earth metal component.

Claim 36 (Withdrawn-Currently Amended): A method for producing hydrogen comprising reforming a hydrocarbon by ~~the use of a~~ contacting the hydrocarbon with the reforming catalyst as recited in claim 19.

Claim 37 (Withdrawn): The method for producing hydrogen as described in claim 36, wherein the reforming is steam reforming, autothermal reforming, partial-oxidation reforming, or carbon dioxide reforming.

Claim 38 (Withdrawn): A fuel cell system comprising a reformer employing a reforming catalyst as recited in claim 19, and a fuel cell employing, as a fuel, hydrogen produced by said reformer.

Claim 39 (Currently Amended): ~~The~~ A hydrocarbon reforming catalyst, ~~as described in claim 19,~~ consisting of components (a), (b), (c) and (d):

(a) at least one compound selected from the group consisting of lanthanum oxide, cerium oxide, and zirconium oxide,

(b) manganese oxide,

(c) alumina, and

(d), supported on the carrier, at least one noble metal component selected from the group consisting of a ruthenium component, a platinum component, a rhodium component, a palladium component, and an iridium component;

wherein component (a) of the carrier is present in an amount of 1 to 20 mass% with respect to the amount of the reforming catalyst; and

wherein the noble metal component is present in an amount of 0.1 to 8 mass% as reduced to the noble element based on the amount of the reforming catalyst.

Claim 40 (Currently Amended): ~~The~~ A hydrocarbon reforming catalyst, comprising: ~~wherein the carrier consists of~~

a carrier consisting of (a) lanthanum oxide, (b) manganese oxide, and (c) alumina, and

(d), supported on the carrier, at least one noble metal component selected from the group consisting of a ruthenium component, a platinum component, a rhodium component, a palladium component, and an iridium component;

wherein component (a) of the carrier is present in an amount of 1 to 20 mass% with respect to the amount of the reforming catalyst; and

wherein the noble metal component is present in an amount of 0.1 to 8 mass% as reduced to the noble element based on the amount of the reforming catalyst.